

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A method and system enables measurement of polarization dependent loss (PDL) in an optical communications system including a plurality of cascaded optical components. An optical signal having a predetermined initial polarization state is launched into the optical communications system. A polarization state of the signal is detected at a selected detection point downstream of the launch point. The PDE is evaluated using the predetermined initial polarization state and the detected polarization state.

09975985.101501